# The
# New York Society Library
# Presents:



# Introduction to Blogging

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See also:
## http://nysltechclass.blogspot.com

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# GETTING STARTED:

## What is a blog?

Blog, an abbreviation for "web log", is an online journal.

Blogs are a fast, versatile, and popular way to share up-to-date information in your own space with a wide or specialized audience across the Internet.

## Why do it?

Blogging can be a fun hobby and an effective business tool.

You can understand blogging as an electronic version of a personal diary, or publishing your own electronic newsletter, magazine, or academic journal.

## What is an RSS Feed?

RSS (Really Simple Syndication) is a method of broadcasting or "feeding" the updated content of your blog to your audience.

It is called "syndication" because the content remains on your blog but it can be broadcast to secondary sources called "feed readers" or "aggregators." It's called "really simple" because it's automatic.

## Why use it?

Most newspapers, and many online news sources, offer RSS feeds. Subscribing to a feed is a quick way to receive updated web content from multiple sites without actually visiting the websites themselves.

Think of it like having newspaper subscriptions delivered to your home rather than going to a store to get it every day.

# Before You Begin…

… you may want to think about a few things:

1. __What will you be blogging about?__ People blog for many different reasons and about many different things. If you can think of it, you can probably find a blog about it!

Some common examples include:

- Personal journal or diary: daily thoughts, moods, activities, etc.
- Politics and current events: Personal analysis and opinion, etc.
- Celebrities: news, gossip, fashion, fan clubs, etc.
- Business/organizational relations: events, promotions, customer service, fundraising, etc.
- Hobbies and special interests: e.g. knitting, fishing, cooking, antiques, pets, sports, etc.
- Consumer reviews: books, movies, television, technology, restaurants, wine, etc.
- Share your talent: poetry, art, short stories, drawings, serial fiction, etc.
- Special experiences: (e.g. Going to law school, adopting a child, getting married, etc.)
- Humor: satire, parody, comics, jokes, etc.
- Professional/occupational (e.g. teachers' lesson plans, labor organizations, technical info.)
- Religion: daily devotional practices, scriptural study, social advocacy, ministry, etc.
- Advice/support forum: addiction, bereavement, disease management, dieting, etc.
- Sharing/collecting articles, videos, or other items of interest found on the web.

2. __Who is your target audience?__ Do you want to reach as many people as possible? Or do you want to find a niche or community of readers with shared interests? Or do you want to make your blog private and accessible only to friends and family, or only for yourself? Do you want your readers to be able to leave comments or feedback on your blog?

-Most sites require the author(s) to register for a user account. Some sites (also require readers to register if they want to post comments or see your profile.
-Pre-existing blog networks/communities can potentially deliver your content to a large, devoted readership, but some have editorial policies, copyright control, topical restrictions, or posting deadlines, or they may not allow you to format the appearance of your posts.
-Social networks can deliver your content to a specified group of known friends or contacts, but this generally requires readers to join the network, too.

3. __How often will you add new content?__
Many readers of blogs stop visiting a blog if there is not new content added to it. Bloggers may choose to post on a regular schedule: every weekday, once a week, or even several times a day, while on the go.

4. __What will your blogging identity be?__
Will you blog under your real name, or will you blog anonymously or under a pseudonym? Will you blog as a representative of an organization or business? Do you want to be an internet celebrity? Also, some bloggers like to collaborate on their content, for example with coworkers, family, or friends.

**5. <u>How much</u> do you want to pay for a blogging service, and/or how much money do you want to make as a blogger?**

-Most sites host your content for free on their own domain or web address. (e.g., http://nysltechclass.**blogger.com**) Most will let you use their platform to host a blog on your own domain (e.g. www.nysltechclass.com) if you have one, but your internet service provider or domain name service may charge an extra fee, and it also requires additional technical know-how.
-Ad-supported sites are free. In fact, if you have a large readership, you might even be able to make a small profit from your blog's advertisers. Some bloggers dislike advertising content and use paid sites which do not include advertisements. Note that if you stop paying your subscription fee on a paid site, your content may disappear or become inaccessible.



If you're having trouble answering these questions, you might want to spend some time reading blogs you like and getting ideas from them.

But don't worry--blogs are customizable, so you can always change your mind later. Many people change their blogs, delete them and start from scratch, or maintain multiple blogs.

The fun of blogging is that it's entirely up to you what you post and how you write. But as you develop and focus your blog's purpose and identity, your target audience may find your blog more consistent and enjoyable.

It's good to have a rough idea of your purpose and audience before you choose a blogging platform and set up your blog. Different platforms have very different features, visual styles, and audiences, and costs which will influence your blog's appearance and accessibility. Also, look for blogs that allow you to manage your privacy, access, and administrative privileges to meet your needs.

**Some examples include:**

Free (ad-supported) blog hosts: http://www.blogger.com/, http://www.wordpress.com/, http://www.livejournal.com/, http://www.xanga.com
Paid (ad-free) blog hosts: http://www.typepad.com/
Blog networks/communities: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/
Social networks: http://www.facebook.com/, http://www.myspace.com/
"Microblogging" (very short posts or status updates): http://www.twitter.com/

# Terminology

As with any activity, blogging has its own jargon full of abbreviations, slang, and technical terms. Many of them are analagous to elements found in print publications. Here's a glossary of terms to help you. Important terms are in **bold**, and more specialized related terms are in *italics*:

**Blog (a.k.a. weblog):** an online platform for self-publishing text or multimedia content, much like a periodical or serial publication, or like a journal or diary. On a blog, content is usually added regularly and displayed in reverse chronological order, with the newest content displayed first.

*Blogger:* an author of a blog.

*Blogging:* the act or activity of writing or maintaining a blog.

*Blogosphere:* the community of bloggers, in terms of shared culture or habits, or in terms of the network of interactions among bloggers in blogs, comments, links, etc.

*Blogroll:* A list found on a blog of other blogs which the author reads or recommends. Like a "further reading" list in a book.

**Blog editor** *or* **blog software:** An online tool for editing and managing your blog's posts, layout, comments, privacy settings, etc.

**Post:** a single entry or article in the blog, or the act of making an entry. A post is usually distinguished by its title and the date and time of its entry.

*Remote or mobile posting:* the use of a mobile phone, email service, or other device or means to post to a blog. (Your provider may charge for text messaging or data access on your mobile phone)

*Embedding:* Including an image, sound, video, widget (see below), feed, or other element from another website in a blog.

*Widget (aka gadget, applet):* A small, modular application (such as a stock ticker, calendar, visit counter, etc. embedded in a blog or somewhere else.
**Archive:** Collection of older posts arranged chronologically.

**Template:** a preformatted, customizeable scheme of colors, typeface, and layout for your blog.

**Comments:** Replies to a post left by readers, generally displayed in chronological order, and sometimes in a nested or hierarchical fashion.

*Moderation:* Moderation is the act of screening or filtering comments on a blog, or restricting the ability to comment to registered users, most often to prevent malicious or other unwanted content, profanity, fighting, advertisements, or spam.

*Comment policy:* Especially on corporate or news blogs, a comment policy is often stated so as to define the types of comments that will be allowed or deleted (e.g. inflammatory or obscene comments, spam).

**Link (or hyperlink):** A specially formatted element of text which connects to another web address or object when the reader clicks it with the mouse cursor. It can be expressed either as the address itself, e.g. http://www.google.com/, or as free text, e.g. Click here to search Google.

*Permalink:* Though a blog changes and is updated all the time, a unique "permanent link" to each post is automatically established and can be used like any other link to find that specific post. Think of it like a bibliographic citation that gives the date and page number of a printed newspaper which has new issues all the time. It is common for bloggers to cite other blogs using permalinks, as it mutually increases readership and gives credit to the original.

*Linkback:* a sort of "reverse link" which indicates when other blogs have made a link to your post.

**Tags:** tags are keywords or subject terms you can add to a post to help readers (and search engines) browse posts related to that topic.

*Tag cloud:* an index of tags displayed in an array such that the more popular tags are displayed more prominently than less frequently used tags.

**Microblog**: short, frequent blog posts, usually 140 characters or less, usually via text messaging service on a mobile phone (your phone provider charges for text messages). Also known as "twittering," or "tweets" on twitter.com or "status updates" on social networks.

**Social network:** an online network of social connections or "friends" which includes the ability to share content with that specific network of friends who have also joined the network.

**Syndication:** Broadcasting or republishing your blog to a secondary source.

**RSS Feed:** Stands for "Really Simple Syndication." It is shorthand for the ability of most blogs to automatically create a stream or "feed" of your content and make it available for other sites or software called "feed readers" to harvest and condense into one display.

*HTML:* HyperText Markup Language. Primarily a language for formatting the visual structure and display of a website's text, including that of your blog. The templates and the blog editor use HTML to format the color, font size, and alignment of your text.

*XML:* Extensible Markup Language. XML can define content separately from display, so that content can be automatically reused and presented in secondary sources. Essentially, the blogging software automatically converts your HTML-based blog to XML and broadcast it to readers in the form of an RSS Feed.

*Ping:* The act of alerting search engines and feed readers of updates on your blog. Most blog editors do this automatically.

**Feed readers/aggregators:** A secondary tool for subscribing to feeds, in order to collect or harvest content from those feeds, and condense it into one display. Most web browsers and email clients offer this function, and downloadable applications and web and mobile applications are also available (for example, Google Reader)

**Date of post**      **Title of post**      **Links of interest**

**friday | 13 june 2003**

📄 **IE/Mac, Rest in Peace**

With the confirmed news that Microsoft is ceasing development of Internet Explorer for Macintosh, a wave of sadness sweeps through the web design and development community. Three years ago, I was only getting my feet wet by messing around with style sheets, constantly frustrated that Netscape 4 wouldn't do what the CSS spec said it was supposed to do. IE5/Mac provided my first opportunity to dive head-first into CSS and begin to realize its potential for designing on the Web. To friends on the Microsoft Mac Biz Unit who poured years of their lives into this product, my condolences. *IE5/Mac, you raised the bar, and certainly served us well.*

**2:50 pm** in Technology, Web | 💬 No comments yet (add yours)

**Permalink**      **Catagory links**      **Comments link**      **Post context**

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## neil's world

Home   Archives   Search   Sideblog   Web Feeds   Resources   Colophon   Contact   Help

**JUNE 23, 2006**

### not been up to much

This blog's been mostly silent of late because I haven't really been up to much - other than playing WoW, obviously. My paladin is now up to level 20 and I did my first run of Deadmines last night with Hari's warlock, plus a warrior, mage and another paladin. Only two of the players died in the run, apart from at the end when we wiped on some murlocs after having killed the boss - which was partly my fault for not getting there in time to heal everyone. I've also been able to pick up some nice 'rare' quality items.

I signed up to ZDNet yesterday to comment on Ed Bott's blog, and despite ticking all of the boxes saying I didn't want to get emails from them it still subscribed me to two of their newsletters, which was rather annoying. I've been successfully unsubscribed from them but it really should have been more clear that I'd get these - especially as by the looks of things they're daily newsletters and thus generate a lot of email.

I don't necessarily mind getting email newsletters when i sign up to things - I get them from sites like Firebox and CD Wow - but I do want it made clear to me that I am going to be getting emails and be given the option to unsubscribe to *all* of them.

Posted on June 23, 2006 10:54 AM | Permalink | Comments (0)

**What's this?**

This is the weblog of Neil Turner, a twenty-something student from York, UK, studying for a Computing masters degree at the University of Bradford.

Subscribe to the web feed
(see the syndication page for more).

You can email him using neil [at] neilturner.me.uk.

< # Leeds Blogs ? >

🇬🇧 BRITBLOG
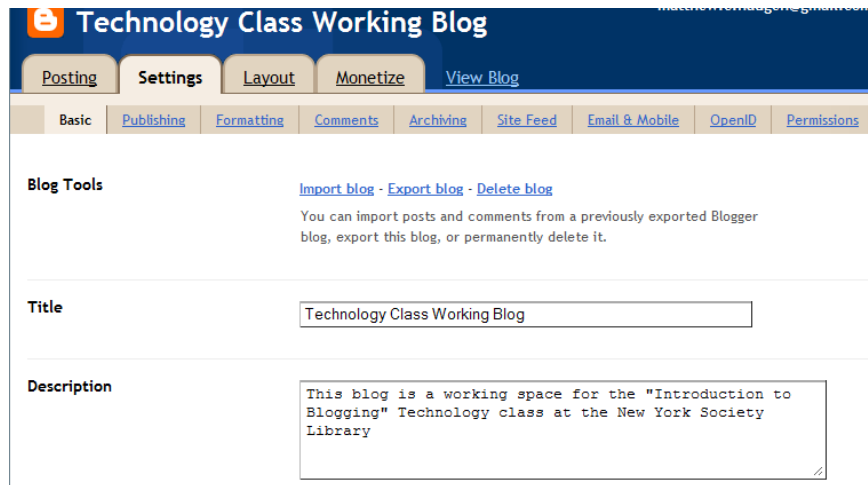
**Search**

Search this blog:

[ Search ]

**Archives**

- June 2006
- May 2006
- April 2006
- March 2006
- View older entries...
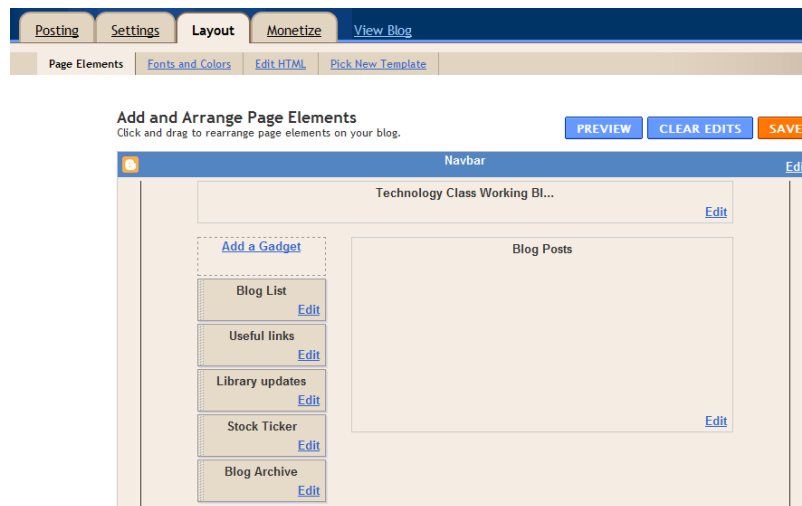
# CREATING AND CUSTOMIZING YOUR BLOG



**Settings:** Once you sign up for a user account, you can then choose the title of your blog, and add your name, interests, images, a blog description, etc.

Also, manage administrative and privacy settings to suit your needs. This includes managing who can read your blog, who can post comments, who can edit posts, whether your blog shows up in searches and directories, and whether mobile posting is allowed.
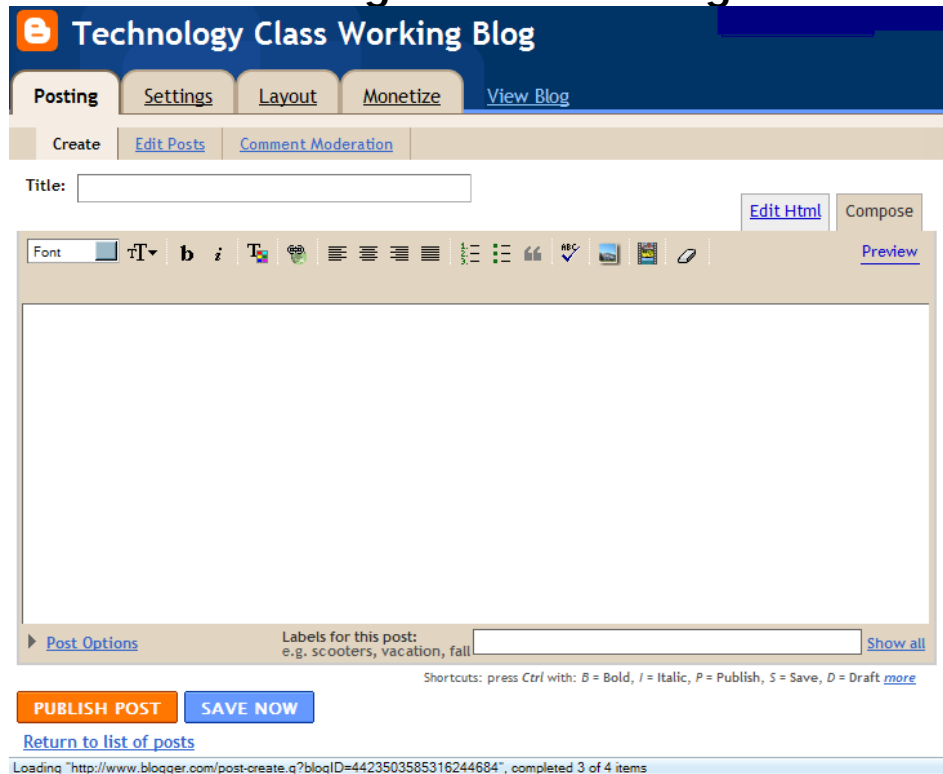


**Layout:** Decide on how you want your blog to look. You can pick a color scheme and template. Most sites come with a set of predefined layouts and schemes that you can choose from, or you can edit your own.

Add blogging "widgets" or embedded applications like guest counters, tag clouds, etc. buttons, stock tickers, etc.

If you want to make your blog look more attractive or unique, there are some sites up that have many additional templates or "skins." One example is blogskins.com, which also comes with Photoshop and HTML tutorials.

## Posting and Moderating



**Posting:** After you've set up your blog, write a few posts to test it out, and make any adjustments to the layout or style that you see fit. At first, it will seem tough to figure out what to write, but once you get into a routine of daily blogging, you may find it addictive. Write about your day, your thoughts, events, ideas, fears, pleasures, the news, current affairs, art, or anything you are interested in!

**Publicize:** your blog by sending the URL to your friends or publish a link on your website. Visit other blogs to build a blogging circle. When you leave comments, add your blogging address so they can visit you, too. When you mention them in your posts, include a link. This increases readership and gives credit to authors for their content.

**Moderate:** Also use the Posting tab to moderate comments on your blog, and to edit or delete previous posts and comments.

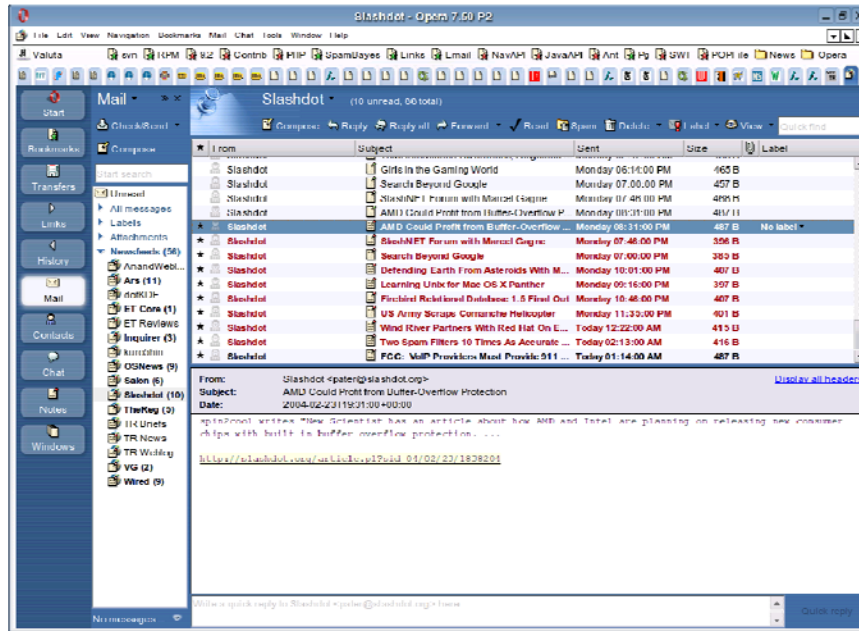### RSS Feed Readers, or Aggregators

RSS readers or aggregators allow users to view content from multiple specified sources by subscribing to (RSS feeds) and automatically receiving updates. Some examples include:
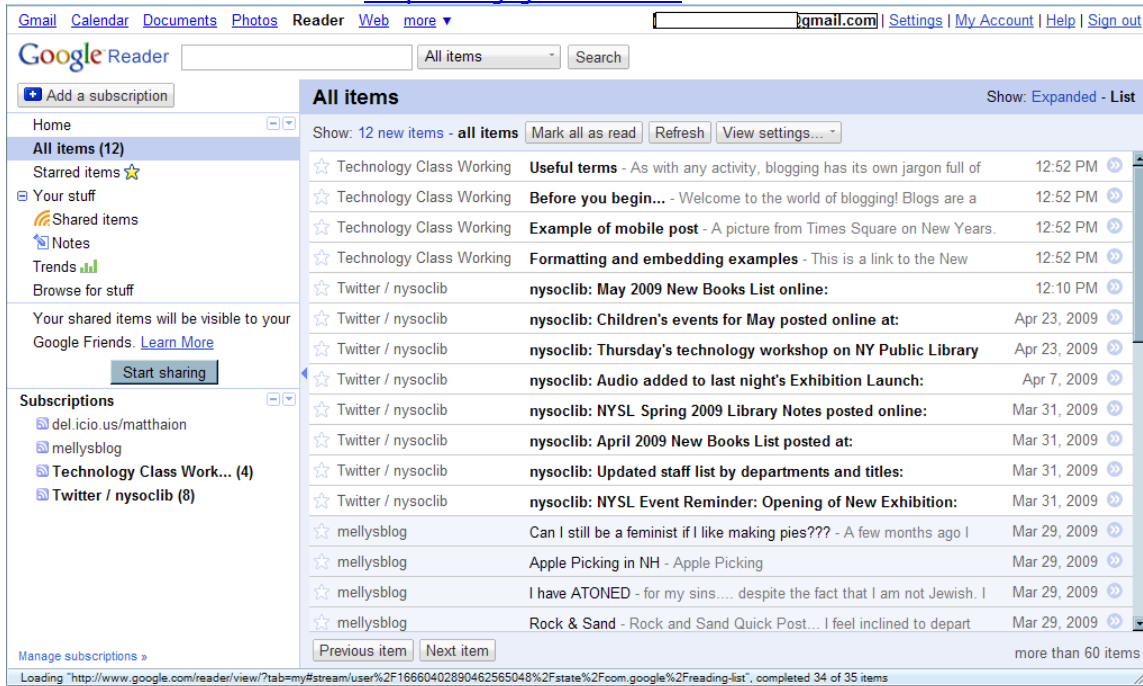
- FeedReader            http://www.feedreader.com
- RSS Captor Pro        http://www.rsscaptor.com/index.php
- RSS Reader            http://www.rssreader.com/rssreader.htm

Google Reader           www.google.com/reader
My Yahoo!               http://my.yahoo.com
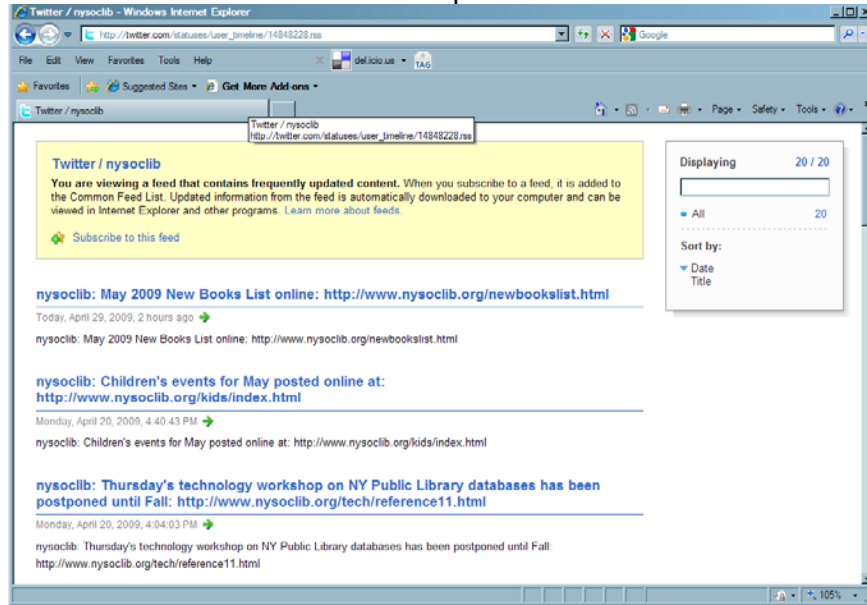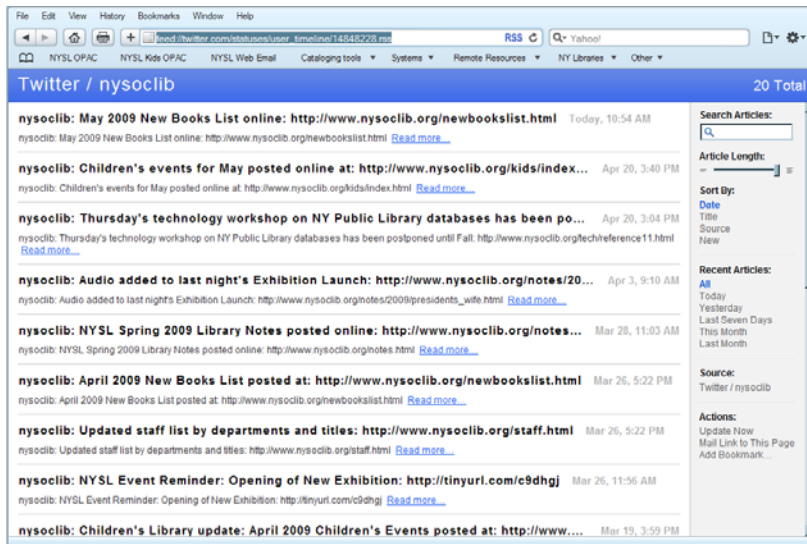
**Browsers:**

You can also use Internet Explorer 7.0, Safari, or Firefox to read and manage your subscriptions to RSS feeds. They will automatically detect feeds on sites you visit, and allow you to bookmark the feed:

Internet Explorer 8.0



Safari 4

## How to find RSS Feeds:

1. Visit a directory of RSS feeds. Sites such as Syndic8 and 2RSS are attempting to categorize all the RSS feeds out there.

2. Search for RSS feeds using a search engine designed to find them such as Feedfinder on Feedster.com. Yahoo and Google both offer specialized searches focused on RSS that can be accessed when you attempt to add content to the MyYahoo / Google Personalized Homepage of the respective sites.

3. Look for the orange RSS or XML icon on blogs or news services you like to read on a regular basis.

## USEFUL LINKS:

### BLOG Platforms:
- Blogger            http://www.blogger.com
- Open Diary        http://www.opendiary.com
- Typepad          http://www.typepad.com
- Wordpress       http://www.wordpress.com
- Xanga             http://www.xanga.com
- Live Journal       http://www.livejournal.com
- Diaryland        http://www.diaryland.com

### POLITICAL BLOGS:
- Andrew Sullivan    http://time.blogs.com/daily_dish/
- DailyKos          http://www.dailykos.com
- Wonkette         http://www.wonkette.com
- The Huffington Post   http://www.huffingtonpost.com

### TECH BLOGS:
- Slashdot.org       http://slashdot.org

### BLOG SEARCH ENGINES
- BlogDigger:        http://www.blogdigger.com
- Bloglines          http://www.bloglines.com
- Blogdex           http://www.blogdex.net
- Feedster          http://www.feedster.com
- Google Blog Search   http://blogsearch.google.com
- Technorati        http://www.technorati.com